

COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Monitoring Question

To what extent does the Superior National Forest emphasize agency, tribal, and public involvement and inter-governmental coordination in carrying out its mission?

Monitoring Conducted

Monitoring Driver: Objective. D-CM-1. "The Forest works cooperatively with other landowners and land managers to protect, enhance, and restore physical and biological resources as well as social and economic values. Cooperative management includes tribal, state, county, local governments as well as other federal agencies."

Partnerships and collaboration are essential to the welfare of the Superior National Forest (SNF). Since its designation as a National Forest in 1909, the SNF has benefited from the efforts of partners and volunteers working together with Forest Service staff to achieve social, economic and ecological goals.

Each year the SNF continues relationships with existing cooperators and enters into new ones. This collaboration has resulted in increased public service and improved land stewardship, both of which enhance the SNF's effort to achieve desired conditions. This overview will share information on formal agreements, including work contributed by volunteers, and informal cooperative efforts conducted on the SNF.

Volunteer Agreements:

The work of our volunteers provides a tremendous value to the public. Volunteers donated their time and talents to the Heritage, Recreation, Forest Management, Wildlife, and Fisheries programs.

- During Fiscal Year 2006, volunteers to the SNF provided:
 - 27,308 hours of service at an appraised value of \$409,620 to the SNF.



Photo 1. Volunteers installing a water bar on a trail.

Formal Agreements:

The Forest Service uses many types of agreements to facilitate its work with others. Each of these has specific Congressional legal authority and requirements. The appropriate instrument depends on what the partnership will accomplish, who will benefit, and who is providing funding. The Forest Service must have appropriate statutory authority prior to entering into any agreement, which could result in the use, obligation, or other commitment of any Forest Service resources.

- During Fiscal Year 2006, there were a total of 82 signed agreements that provided or obligated
 - \$447,206.13 worth of cash and services to the SNF from partners
 - \$524,384.23 worth cash, goods and services to partners from the SNF.
- Partners and Forest Service Staff:
 - Initiated 48 new agreements
 - Modified 68 existed agreements

Of the 48 new agreements, there were 11 Collection Agreements, 3 Challenge Cost Shares Agreements, 6 Cooperative Fire Agreements, 10 Interagency Agreements, 2 Law Enforcement Agreements, 10 Participating Agreements, 1 Road Agreement, and 5 Memorandums of Understanding.

Total value of Formal Agreements and Volunteers:

Formal agreements and the volunteer efforts of our partners led to a tremendous amount of work on the SNF that would not have been accomplished without their help. The total value of the work provided by our Partners through formal agreements and through the work of our volunteers to the SNF equals over \$856,826.

Informal Agreements:

The SNF has had numerous on-going informal agreements with state, county, local and other federal agencies, and non-profits. These informal partnerships have not been documented through the formal agreement process and are not accounted for in the numbers listed above. However, they do greatly benefit the SNF.

An example of an informal partnerships include the development and implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans, where Forest Service staff works with local residents, local elected officials, County officials, volunteer fire departments, the Department of Natural Resources, businesses and others to develop management practices across land ownership to reduce the threat of wildfire.



Table 1 displays some of the Superior National Forest Partners. For a more complete listing, see Appendix F.

Table 1. Examples of Superior National Forest Partners		
➤ Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians	➤ University of Minnesota	➤ Private Landowners
➤ Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	➤ Voyageurs National Park	➤ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
➤ Bois Forte (Nett Lake) Band of MN Chippewa	➤ Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources	➤ Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
➤ 1854 Treaty Authority	➤ Minnesota Forest Resources Council	➤ U.S. Geological Survey
➤ Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	➤ Regional partners with the Lake Superior Lake wide Management Plan and Great Lakes Ecological Assessment	➤ Friends of the BWCAW
➤ Cook County	➤ Minnesota Department of Transportation	➤ Bio-Diversity Research Institute
➤ Koochiching County	➤ MN Dept of Agriculture	➤ Trout Unlimited
➤ Lake County	➤ The Nature Conservancy	➤ Potlatch Corporation
➤ St. Louis County	➤ State Historical Preservation Office and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	➤ Laurentian Environmental Learning Center
➤ US Fish and Wildlife Service	➤ Minnesota Department of Health	➤ Law enforcement
➤ North Central Forest Experiment Station		➤ Interested public
➤ USDA-FS North Central Research Station		
➤ Minnesota Conservation Corps		

Necessary Follow-up Actions and Management Recommendations

After reviewing monitoring findings, the Forest Interdisciplinary Team identified the following follow-up actions and management actions to carry forward.

Follow-up Actions

- ✱ Continue interviews of Forest Service Program Managers and other staff to ensure their work with partners is documented.
- ✱ Update the key contacts database to reflect all existing partners and potential partners.
- ✱ Continue to formalize informal partnerships through Memorandums of Understanding and other Agreements.

Management Recommendations

- ✱ Systematically seek partners as part of the Forest Prioritization approach. Involve Regional Office programs to bring regional and national partnerships to the SNF.

The SNF is continuing the development of a database of all partnerships, including those with formal grants and agreements and those who contribute through non-formal relationships. This will give a more accurate picture of how the SNF can expand partnerships to provide benefits to both partners and to the SNF. In the future, more of these informal partnerships will become formalized.

Collaborative Opportunities To Improve Efficiency And Quality Of Program

Partnerships

The Partnership Coordinator and SNF staff will work to increase the effectiveness of partnerships and collaboration with citizens, communities, and organizations. The SNF will coordinate with other agencies, governments, and universities to monitor and document research and activities on and off the SNF.

Efforts will be made to share data, coordinate future activities, and potentially collaborate to fund future efforts to initiate the five year plans for all resources as part of implementing the Forest Plan. Superior National Forest employees will actively seek partners as they plan and initiate their program of work. By engaging the energy, passion and commitment of others through partnerships and collaborative processes, the SNF and the public will work together to care for the land. For a more complete listing of partnerships, see Appendix F.

Summary Conclusion

- ✱ Volunteers provided 27,308 hours of service at an appraised value of \$409,620 to the SNF.
- ✱ There were a total of 82 signed agreements that provided or obligated
 - \$447,206.13 worth of cash and services to the SNF from partners
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- ✱ Partners and Forest Service Staff:
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